

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for accurately metering out powder, comprising:

a container of powder, comprising:

an adjustable opening through which the powder is dispensed, said opening being in direct communication with the container;

adjusting means for adjusting said opening; and

a checking means for checking the amount of powder dispensed, in relation with said adjusting means; and

a vibrating and/or tapping means for vibrating or tapping the container, wherein the container further comprises a stirrer situated within the interior volume of said container, and wherein said stirrer is arranged along an axis passing through the opening, said stirrer comprising:

a first end arranged near ~~[[the]]~~ a mid-plane of the opening, and

a second end at the opposite end to the first end and which is connected to a device transmitting to the stirrer a back-and-forth movement along said axis passing through the opening, ~~and possibly a rotary movement about said axis passing through the opening.~~

26. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 25, which is capable to dispense powders with an accuracy of 100  $\mu\text{g}$  or better, ~~preferably with an accuracy of 50  $\mu\text{g}$  or better, and more preferably still with an accuracy of 10  $\mu\text{g}$  or better.~~

27. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 25, which is capable to dispense powders with a mean accuracy of 0.5 mg or better, ~~preferably with a mean accuracy of 0.2 mg or better, and more preferably still with a mean accuracy of 0.1 mg or better.~~

28. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 25, in which the opening is adjustable to the extent of being completely closed off.

29. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 25, in which the opening is in the shape of a triangle.

30. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in any claim 25, in which the adjusting means comprises ~~opening is chosen from an opening with a plug valve or an opening with a slide valve.~~

31. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 25, in which the container comprises a receptacle part and a stopper part.

32. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 25, in which the container comprises a hopper feeding the opening.

33. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 25, in which the adjusting means are controlled by software as a function of checking measurements supplied by the checking means.

34. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 25, in which the adjusting means comprise a motor connected to a transmission element actuating the opening or closure of the adjustable opening.

35. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 25, in which the checking means is a balance having a weighing accuracy of 0.1 mg or better.

36. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 25, in which the means for vibrating and/or tapping the container is a retractable finger that strikes the outside of the container.

37. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 25, in which the stirrer is includes a rod.

38. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in in claim 25, in which the first end of said stirrer comprises a rod and the second end of said stirrer comprises a leaf bent back on itself to form a loop that is elongate along said axis passing through the opening, said leaf comprising fins which project from the interior surface of the bent-over leaf toward said axis.

39. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 25, in which the device transmitting a back-and-forth movement to the stirrer comprises: a transmission means connected to the second end of the stirrer, a pushing means, a pulling means, said pushing means transmitting a translational movement to said transmission means in a first direction along the axis of said transmission means and said pulling means transmitting a translational movement to said transmission means in the opposite direction to the first direction.

40. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 25, in which the device transmitting a rotary movement to the stirrer comprises a transmission means connected to the second end of the stirrer, said transmission means comprising driving gearing which is driven by drive gearing fixed to a motor

41. (Currently Amended) The apparatus (4) as claimed in claim 25, in which: the first end of said stirrer comprises a rod and the second end of said stirrer comprises a leaf bent back on itself to form a loop that is elongate along said axis passing through the opening, said leaf comprising fins  $[(\cup)]$  which project from the interior surface of the bent-over leaf toward said axis, the device transmitting a back-and-forth movement to the stirrer comprises a transmission means connected to the second end of the stirrer, a pushing means, a pulling means, said pushing means transmitting a translational movement to said transmission means in a first direction along the axis of said transmission means and said pulling means transmitting a translational movement to said transmission means in the opposite direction to the first direction, the device transmitting a rotary movement to the stirrer comprises a transmission means connected to the second end of the stirrer, said transmission means comprising driving gearing which is driven by drive gearing fixed to a motor.

42. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 25, in which the tapping means and/or the stirrer are controlled by software as a function of checking measurements supplied by the checking means, ~~and possibly as a function of characteristics of the powder.~~

43. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 25, in which the container further comprises a scraper, ~~preferably a curved blade or a rotary brush.~~

44. (Currently Amended) A process for accurately metering out powders employing the apparatus as claimed in claim 25, comprising one or more of the following steps:

bringing the container into the metering position,

using the adjusting means to open the adjustable opening,

~~possibly~~ vibrating or tapping the container,

using the checking means to measure the amount of powder dispensed,

using the adjusting means to open or close the adjustable opening as a function of the measurement returned by the checking means, and

adjusting the means that vibrate and/or tap the container as a function of the measurement returned by the checking means.

45. (New) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the device transmitting to the stirrer a back-and-forth movement also transmits to the stirrer a rotary movement around the axis.

46. (New) The apparatus as claimed in claim 25, which is capable to dispense powders with an accuracy of 50 µg or better.

47. (New) The apparatus as claimed in claim 25, which is capable to dispense powders with an accuracy 10  $\mu\text{g}$  or better.

48. (New) The apparatus as claimed in claim 25, which is capable to dispense powders with a mean accuracy of 0.2 mg or better.

49. (New) The apparatus as claimed in claim 25, which is capable to dispense powders with a mean accuracy of 0.1 mg or better.

50. (New) The apparatus as claimed in claim 25, in which the tapping means and/or the stirrer are controlled by software as a function of checking measurements supplied by the checking means and as a function of characteristics of the powder.